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NEW BOOKS

Greek Mathematics and Science. By SIR THOMAS L. HEATH. Cambridge, the University Press, 1921, pp. ii+23.

This little monograph presents, in the dignified topography of the Cambridge University Press, a paper read before a joint meeting of the Classical Association (Leeds and District Branch), the Mathematical Association (Yorkshire Branch), and the Yorkshire Natural Science Association, at the University of Leeds, on March 5, 1921.

The American reader will probably be conscious of a feeling of surprise that three such associations should have joined to hear a paper that is devoted chiefly to Greek mathematics, even when presented by the world's leading authority upon the subject. That a classical group should join with a mathematical one might have been expected, even in America, but that an association devoted to natural science should also have joined in the meting would, unfortunately, be quite unheard of in this part of the world.

A second surprise that will come to the reader is due to the large amount of interesting and instructive material that has been condensed in so few pages—material with which a scholar will find himself somewhat familiar in most cases, but which will also contain much that is new to nearly everyone who opens the pamphlet. It is so fashionable in this country to dismiss Greek as a museum antiquity, and to devote the time that the language formerly consumed to such branches as natural science and sociology, that our teachers have lost the interest that their predecessors had in the greatest civilization of ancient times—a civilization to which the world is today so largely indebted.

And yet, in geometry particularly, a subject essentially Greek, the teacher is greatly handicapped who does not know the etymology of the terms in common use. Moreover, it is very suggestive in relation to methods of arousing an interest in the subject to know what "equilateral" means and that it is only a Latin translation of *isopleuros,* which contains the *iso* of "isosceles" and "isothermal," and the *pleuros* of "pleurisy." What a new interest comes into the rather dull vocabulary of the science when we see the relation of "rhombus" to a spinning top, and when we know that the Greeks called an angle by the suggestive word *glochis* (arrow head), that a surface was to them a *chroia* (color, or skin), and that a point was a *stigme* (puncture)! The Greek terms are, of course, of little moment, but the naive way of naming the geometric concepts will add a good deal of interest in teaching the subject.

There is, however, much more than this in the monograph. There is, for example, mention of the prophetic vision of the Greek geometers with respect to astronomy, and of the essential features of the doctrines of Pythagoras. There is also a statement, well worth reading, setting forth the influence of the Pythagorean brotherhood, even after the death of the founder. And with all this there is a brief discussion of the indebtedness of science to the labors of men like Aristotle, Heraclides, Democritus, and Anaxagoras.

The pamphlet can, no doubt, be ordered through the New York correspondent of the Cambridge Press, and is well worth reading by those who are interested in the better teaching of mathematics.

David Eugene Smith.

Èléments de Géométrie. By Alexis-Claude Clairaut. Paris, Gathier-Villars et Cie, 1920, 2 vols. Vol. I, pp. xiv + 95; vol. II, pp. 103.

Probably the most trite remark that anyone of our profession can make is that education is at present undergoing a tremendous change. The remark is true—that is, it is more or less true; it is true to us, just as a tree in a forest may seem gigantic to our eyes, but a commonplace thing to the aviator a mile above the earth's surface. Nevertheless it is probably a necessity that what we do should seem to us big with possibilities, so that we may be spurred on by laudable ambition.

Those of us who wish to see elementary geometry placed upon a more satisfactory foundation, at least so far as the teaching of the subject goes, will probably agree in a general way to such propositions as the following: (1) Geometry should begin with intuitive work, and especially with measuring; (2) in particular, we should first lead our pupils to employ the most natural means of measuring distances out of doors; (3) still